

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 AGR-20

STR-08 SCEM-02 IGA-02 /187 W
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R 281058Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9338

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 20013

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, TH, JA

SUBJECT: THAI COMMENT ON SIXTH ANNUAL JAPAN THAI TRADE COMMITTEE
MEETING

1. SUMMARY. UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR TRADE EXPANSION IN
COURSE INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS DESCRIBED RESULTS
OF SIXTH ANNUAL JAPAN-THAI TRADE COMMITTEE MEETING IN TOKYO AS
"BEST EVER" FOR THAILAND. SAID JAPANESE GOVERNMENT MADE SIGNIFICANT
CONCESSIONS IN RESPONSE TO THAI DEMANDS FOR INCREASED JAPANESE
PURCHASES OF THAI EXPORT , TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THAI FARMERS
AND INDUSTRY AND FOR COMMITMENT TO EN* COMPETITION WITH THAILAND
IN INTERNATIONAL RICE MARKET. OFFICIAL POSED QUESTION ABOUT UTILITY
OF SIMILAR MEETINGS WITH U.S. AND ALL BUT CHALLENGED USG AND PRIVATE
INDUSTRY TO KEEP PACE WITH LIBERAL ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY JAPAN IN
RESPONSE TO THAI CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN CONVERSATION WITH TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS, RTG DEPUTY UNDER

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR TRADE EXPANSION, DR. SNOH, DESCRIBED RESULTS OF SIXTH ANNUAL JAPAN-THAI TRADE COMMITTEE AS "BEST EVER" FOR THAILAND. EXPRESSED PLEASURE OVER MANNER IN WHICH OUTNUMBERED THAIS HAD DEALT WITH "WAVE UPON WAVE" OF JAPANESE BUREAUCRATS FROM FOUR MINISTRIES. DR. SNOH SAID THAI DELEGATION HAD ACHIEVED ALL ITS GOALS INCLUDING:

A. FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT BY JAPAN THAT IT WOULD NOT COMPETE WITH THAILAND AS TRADITIONAL RICE EXPORTING COUNTRY AND WOULD UNDERTAKE TO PURCHASE THAI RICE.

B. COMMITMENT IN DETAIL BY JAPAN TO INCREASED PURCHASE OF OTHER THAI AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES INCLUDING TAPIOCA FLOUR, FROZEN BOILED BEEF, CANNED PINEAPPLE AND BROILER CHICKENS.

C. ASSISTANCE BY JAPANESE TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO HELP CONTROL CROP PESTS AND DISEASES AND ALSO LIVESTOCK DISEASES WITH OBJECTIVE OF INCREASED PRODUCTION FOR EXPORT TO JAPAN.

3. DR. SNOH THOUGHT TIMING OF TRADE COMMITTEE TALKS HAD BEEN ADVANTAGEOUS TO THAILAND IN THAT THEY CAME AFTER VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF THANOM GOVERNMENT IN MID-OCTOBER, JUST BEFORE PLANNED VISIT TO ASEAN CAPITALS BY JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TANAKA, AND AT A TIME WHEN JAPANESE INTERESTED IN DIVERSIFYING SOURCES OF SUPPLY. COMMERCIAL ATTACHE OF JAPANESE EMBASSY, A PARTICIPANT IN TALKS, EXPRESSED SAME OPINION IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH EMB*FF.

4. IN EXPRESSING SATISFACTION AT JAPANESE READINESS TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS IN THAILAND'S FAVOR, DR. SNOH SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IMPORTANCE OF JAPANESE COMMITMENT NOT TO COMPETE IN WORLD RICE MARKET WITH THAILAND. SNOH SAID THIS COMMITMENT WOULD EASE TASK OF LONG-TERM EXPORT EXPANSION PLANNING FOR THAILAND. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT USG MIGHT WELL FOLLOW JAPAN'S LEAD IN THIS AREA, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PL-480 RICE SALES TO INDONESIA. SMALL SIZE OF THAI SUGAR QUOTA TO U.S. ALSO MENTIONED.

5. SNOH ALSO NOTED IMPORTANCE OF JAPANESE AGREEMENT TO INCREASE PURCHASES OF THAI POULTRY. SAID QUANTUM JUMPS IN POULTRY PRODUCTION IN THAILAND HAD THREATENED TO DEPRESS THAI DOMESTIC PRICES TO UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL, WITH RESULT POULTRY TRADE GROUPS HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESSURING RTG TO FIND MARKETS FOR THAI POULTRY. SNOH ALSO MENTIONED THAT SINCE POULTRY PRODUCTION IN THAILAND BASED ON DOMESTICALLY PRODUCED FEED, ALL VALUE ADDED IS THAI SOURCE.

6. DR. SNOH SAID BUNKER FUEL SHORTAGE IN JAPAN WAS DISCUSSED IN TRADE COMMITTEE FORUM. SHORTAGE OF BUNKERS IN JAPAN THREATENED THAILAND'S ABILITY TO EXPORT MANY AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES INCLUDING MAIZE, RUBBER AND RICE BECAUSE CARGO SHIPS WERE AVOIDING THAILAND

TO MAKE CERTAIN THEY COULD OBTAIN ADEQUATE FUEL FOR ROUND TRIP.
SNOH SAID RTG WAS WORKING ON ALLOCATION SYSTEM FOR BUNKERING IN
EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE SHIPS TO CALL AT BANGKOK.

7. IN ADDITION TO JAPANESE CONCESSIONS ENUMERATED ABOVE, SNOH SAW
SIXTH TRADE COMMITTEE RESULTS AS WATERSHED FOR INCREASED
FINANCIAL SUPPORT BY JAPANESE PRIVATE BUSINESS FIRMS FOR SOCIAL
AND COMMUNITY BETTERMENT WORK IN THAILAND. JAPANESE GOVERNMENT,
ACCORDING TO SNOH, HAD ALSO AGREED TO SUPPORT STUDY ON DIS-
TRIBUTION OF BENEFITS FROM JAPANESE INVESTMENT IN THAILAND.

8. IN RESPONSE TO SNOH'S SUGGESTION FOR PERIODIC MEETINGS WITH USG
OFFICIALS, ECON/CML COUNSELOR STATED EMBASSY ALWAYS WILLING TO
LISTEN TO AND DISCUSS THAI TRADE AND OTHER PROBLEMS, BUT ADDED
THAT FORMAL GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT MEETINGS WOULD REQUIRE
WASHINGTON CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM, TRADE AGREEMENTS, TRADE CONCESSIONS, FUELING SYSTEMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO20013
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973124/aaaaackw.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Nov-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THAI COMMENT ON SIXTH ANNUAL JAPAN THAI TRADE COMMITTEE MEETING
TAGS: ETRD, TH, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005